

On the Town

By CHARLES McHARRY

Famous Lady Spies

In the movie "Otley," Romy Schneider plays a member of the British secret service, and although she gets roughed up a little, she doesn't wind up as did Mata Hari and some other real-life nosy ladies of history.

Mata Hari was born Margaret Gertrude Zelle in Java of Javanese and Dutch parents. She ran through a short marriage, became a dancing girl, at which time she took the name Mata Hari, and finally a spy for Germany in World War I.

She was an inept agent and the Germans were soon sorry they ever heard of her. Knowing she had blown her cover and that the French were on to her, the Germans sent her to Paris. Compounding the double-cross, they also dispatched a coded note describing her mission, for they also knew the French had broken the code. The French shot her.

Also sorry he ever heard of Mata Hari is Broadway's David Merrick. He produced a musical titled "Mata Hari" which folded out of town at a loss which has been estimated at \$1 million.

But, back to lady spies. Elsbeth Schragmuller, 28 when the war erupted in 1914, was a master spy known as Fraulein Doctor. She was also known as Tiger Eyes.

She was ruthless and cruel and knew her business. No one except close confederates seemed to know her, and every woman spy captured by the Allies was suspected of being Fraulein Doctor. She was never caught and she remains a legend.

Great Listener

Belle Day was a Confederate spy renowned for her exploits. On one notable occasion she remained in a closet for hours while listening to a staff meeting of Union officers. What she overheard was enough to save Stonewall Jackson and his army in the early days of the war. She went to England at the end of the war and died there.

Her counterpart in Union ranks was Emma Edmond, a Canadian who became active here because of her hatred of slavery. A nurse, she turned to spying. She penetrated Southern lines disguised variously as an Irish peddler and a Negro.

She was present at the battles of Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Vicksburg. She was famous as an unmasker of Confederate agents and after the war she recorded her experiences. The Confederate rifle she carried is in a museum in Washington.

British agent Inayat Khan spent her girlhood in Russia and France. She fled to England when Hitler invaded France and agreed to return to France for the British secret service. She was successful in helping saboteurs and Allied airmen who had been shot down. The Germans caught and executed her in the fall of 1944.

Bailed Out George

The British adjutant general occupied the Philadelphia home of Lydia Darrah, a Quaker, during the Revolutionary War. She spied on the high-level meetings in her house, and she learned of a planned attack on Washington's army at Whitmarsh. She obtained a pass from Lord Howe to get through British lines and got to Washington in time for him to save his army.

Born in northern France of a noble family, Louise des Bettignos fled to England when the Germans invaded in 1914. The British asked her to return to Lille as a spy. As Alice du Bois, she operated in both France and Germany before being caught and put in prison, where she died of typhus.

She was buried in Cologne, and after the war she was reinterred in France with full military honors.



Romy Schneider